

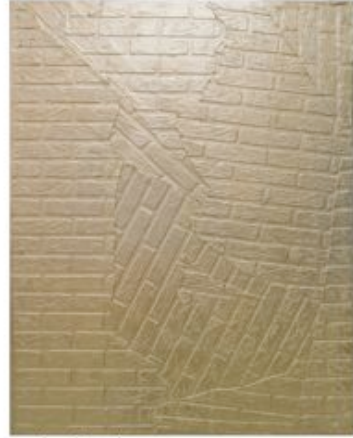
LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Bass! How low can you go?

Curated by Amir Shariat



Agostino Bonalumi
Blu, 1971
Extroflexed canvas and vinyl
27.6 x 23.6 in / 70 x 60 cm



Raphael Danke
The disappearance of a girl held by a man, 2013
Dutch metal and wallpaper on canvas
49.2 x 39.4 in / 125 x 100 cm

May 8 – June 1, 2013

Opening reception: May 8, 6 pm to 8 pm

New York, New York (April 23, 2013) Leila Heller is pleased to announce “Bass! How low can you go?,” a group show curated by internationally renowned collector Amir Shariat. Coinciding with the Frieze Art Fair, the exhibition will be on view from May 8 to June 1, 2013 and will include works by young artists Erica Baum, Raphael Danke, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, Sheree Hovsepian, Anthony Pearson, Gibb Slife, Italian masters Alighiero Boetti, Agostino Bonalumi, Enrico Castellani, Lucio Fontana, Dadamaino, Paolo Scheggi, as well as Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol.

Hip Hop artist Simon Harris’ 1989 Number One hit song “Bass (How low can you go?)” was based on a sample of Public Enemy’s foot-stomping, metal crunching 1987 song “Bring The Noise,” which, itself, was covered by notorious thrash metal band Anthrax in 1991. In Bass (How low can you go?), Simon screams “Turn it Up!” and “Yeah, Boy!”, each phrase sampled from Public Enemy’s legendary frontmen Chuck D and Flavor Flav. “Bring the Noise” remains one of the most sampled rap songs of all time.

Rap in a sense resembles contemporary art or even art at large. Musicians and contemporary artists mix, record, remix, sample, scratch, voice over and let the brushstrokes spin! The essence of hip-hop and rap is based on sampling older songs, with the Godfather of Soul, James Brown, being the number one sampled king of music. Contemporary art’s master kingpin is Andy Warhol and, also, to a large extent, the Italian Masters of the second half of the last century. “Mankind has become furious in the fast lane and art allows us to dream but also to reassess the reality of the world we live in,” says Shariat. “The same way that we delve back into history to better understand the present and predict the future, artists find inspiration in the works of previous generations.”

It is with the tools of history, coupled with an innate sampling spirit, that Erica Baum, Raphael Danke, Sheree Hovsepian, Rachel Hovnanian, Anthony Pearson and Gibb Slife's creativity comes to the fore. The origins of their sins can be traced back to Andy Warhol and also to Agostino Bonalumi, Enrico Castellani, Dadamaino, Lucio Fontana and Paolo Scheggi. The Italians knew how to bend the fabric, slice the canvas and, finally, cut the Gordian Knot. Bonalumi, Castellani, Dadamaino and Scheggi represent the Italian post-war avant-garde, itself deeply associated with the Argentine-born Fontana. "Whilst juxtaposing the young guns' works with their mentors' one delights in the fact that history does not repeat itself but is taken to the next level," observes Shariat.

Shariat continues: "When Chuck D raps "He can cut a record from side to side," he is cannily referring to Terminator X, the legendary Public Enemy DJ. Erica Baum and Gibb Slife allude to the voyeurism of Warhol, while the former revels in the genius of Michelangelo Antonioni's masterpiece *Blow Up* and the latter can't stop our innate thirst for news and gossip. Sheree samples Fontana's slashes for only Man Ray rescues the paper from being sliced up. Her sculptures then take Rodin to the next level or should I say the Tower of Babel? Anthony, a seasoned record collector, meets Bonalumi head on, takes his hand and shows him the way to America. Rachel meets Enrico and Enrico meets Rachel: it's not the economy stupid, it's the fabric of society! Raphael D rounds them all up and shouts "Danke" to Agostino, Andy, Dadamaino, Enrico, Lucio and Paolo. Fontana's 1946 White Manifesto sums up the exhibition: "Matter, color and sound in motion are the phenomena whose simultaneous development makes up the new art".

Turn it Up! Bring the Noise!

About Amir Shariat:

Amir Shariat is a private equity executive who has been immersed in the art world for most of his life, having lived mainly in Europe. He has been a member of the boards of Tate Patrons and Tate Young Patrons, as well as a supporter and donor of projects such as Artangel and museums such as Camden Arts Centre, ICA London and Tate Modern. Amir has been supporting various charities in England and the USA via a program of art donations. He currently resides in Dubai, where he is also a Patron of Art Dubai.

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